GOAL 7 - QUALITY ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

The public and decision makers at all levels will have access to information about environmental conditions and human health to inform decision making and help assess the general environmental health of communities. The public will also have access to educational services and information services and tools that provide for the reliable and secure exchange of quality environmental information.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE STRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

EPA strives to provide the right information, at the right time, in the right format, to the right people. This means making quality environmental and management information available to decision makers for developing environmental policies and priorities. It means making environmental data publicly accessible to support family and community involvement in environmental developments. It means building the necessary infrastructure to provide secure information, reliable data, efficient and timely access, and analytical information tools.

EPA makes environmental information more widely available through education, partnerships, and other methods. In partnership with states and others, the Agency is building a National Environmental Information Exchange Network (NEIEN) to effectively share information. To make environmental information more accessible and readily understood, EPA develops analytical tools, such as its redesigned Internet Web site for integrated access to environmental information and the forthcoming report on the environment reporting on the status of the Nation's environmental conditions. The report, part of a multiyear Environmental Indicators Initiative to provide indicators of human health and environmental conditions, will be a valuable tool for helping to assess the effectiveness of environmental programs.

EPA continues to improve the reliability, capability, and security of its information infrastructure. New Agency policies and procedures for coordinated information system investment and development ensure the best use of Agency resources in managing information and expanding access to it. EPA's substantial progress in keeping pace with the evolving challenges of information security has been recognized by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the General Accounting Office, as well as the Agency's Inspector General. EPA made substantial progress in meeting new information security challenges and corrected a material weakness in information security by implementing effective new security controls. *(Refer to Section III, "Management Accomplishments and Challenges," for further discussion.)*

FY 2002 PERFORMANCE

EPA's information goals and objectives are in alignment with the President's Management Agenda[1] initiative to improve management of and access to government information. The Agency is actively involved in 14 of the federal electronic government projects to better serve citizens' needs and has been commended for improvements in providing electronic access to information, strengthening information security, and making results-based investments in technology. EPA's environmental e-government initiatives include the NEIEN, electronic reporting, and electronic dockets. In FY 2002 OMB designated EPA as the managing partner and lead agency for the President's electronic On-Line Rulemaking Initiative.

Availability of Quality Environmental Information

In FY 2002 EPA continued to make progress in improving access to quality information. The Agency worked successfully with state and tribal partners to further develop the building blocks of the NEIEN. Using Internet technology, the NEIEN promotes more timely,

secure, cooperative data exchange among federal, state, tribal, and local governments; improves the delivery of government services to citizens; and reduces the business paperwork burden. EPA awarded $25 million in NEIEN Grants to 44 states, 17 tribes, and 1 U.S. territory (Puerto Rico) to build NEIEN.

EPA developed the Central Data Exchange (CDX), a NEIEN central reporting facility that provides users with faster access to reliable data. The CDX became fully operational in FY 2002 and quickly became so popular that the number of state users (45) is now three times the Agency's goal for the first operational year. Including reporting industries, there are now more than 8,000 external CDX registered users, more than double the FY 2001 number. CDX currently processes information flows for the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), Toxic Substances Control Act, Permit Compliance System Interim Data Exchange Format, Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, and National Emissions Inventory. EPA established a long-term, performance-based contract to efficiently support the CDX and other Agency data processing with state-of-the-art technical support. Through NEIEN and CDX, EPA integrated environmental information from state, federal, and EPA program systems; improved data accuracy; and supported better use and understanding of environmental information.

In FY 2002 EPA enhanced the TRI program to reduce reporting burden, improve data quality, and increase access to data. One improvement was the first full release of EPA's new intelligent desktop software, TRI Made Easy (TRI-ME). TRI-ME assists facilities in understanding and completing their TRI reporting obligations. Facilities using TRI-ME to submit Reporting Year 2001 TRI reports numbered 10,799, representing 43 percent of all reporting facilities[2] and exceeding an Agency target of 25 percent. Data that EPA collected on the prior, pilot version of TRI-ME indicate that facilities that use TRI-ME for the first time reduce reporting burden by 25 percent and reduce errors by about 50 percent.[3] Ninety-two percent of TRI facilities prepared and/or submitted Reporting Year 2001 TRI forms electronically in FY 2002, 7 percent above the Agency's goal.[4]

EPA collected and processed 110,000 chemical form submissions in FY 2002, as well as 2,400 miscellaneous documents from about 24,800 facilities.[5] In FY 2002 the Agency released the TRI data for 2000, which was the first year of public information on persistent bioaccumulative toxic (PBT) chemicals, including dioxins, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls.[6] This PBT reporting provided the public with more complete information on toxic chemicals in their communities; in particular, there were an additional 6,947 PBT chemical reports from 3,543 facilities, 762 of which had not reported in the previous year.[7]

To help facilities prepare their first year of reporting for lead and lead compounds with the new lower reporting thresholds, EPA produced and published a guidance document on the new lead rule through a public notice and comment process.[8] The first TRI reports for lead under the new thresholds were due on July 1, 2002, and will be publicly available in June 2003. These new lead reports will give the public more complete information on the lead releases and waste management activities.

Better Understanding Through Increased Access

In FY 2002, to support better access to and understanding of environmental information, EPA designed several tools to integrate and interpret the information used to support environmental decisions. EPA launched the Environmental Indicators Initiative and identified indicators for the first key product, a draft report on the Nation's environmental conditions, which the Agency plans to release in FY 2003 for public review. The Agency is identifying indicators of the condition of the country's air, land, water, human health, and ecosystems. In FY 2002 EPA identified, reviewed, and analyzed more than 130 potential environmental indicators and selected 80 to include in the environmental report. The Agency also established a new partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human

INTEGRATED ACCESS TO LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION THROUGH EPA'S WINDOW TO MY ENVIRONMENT

In January 2002 EPA received an Excellence.gov award for Window to My Environment as an innovative federal electronic government information service. EPA's Window to My Environment is a powerful Web-based tool that provides a wide range of federal, state, or local information about environmental conditions for any area in the United States specified by the user. EPA provides this helpful information tool on its public Internet site at, in partnership with federal, state and local government and other organizations.

To get started, users can access Window to My Environment at http://www.epa.gov/enviro/wme and input a ZIP code or the name of a city/town and state. Features include:

- An interactive map–shows the location of regulated facilities, monitoring sites, water bodies, population density, perspective topographic views and more, with hotlinks to state and federal information about these items of interest.
- Your Window–selected geographic statistics about the area of interest, including estimated population, county and urban area designations, local watersheds and water bodies, plus much more.
- Your Environment–links to information from federal, state, and local partners on environmental issues such as air and water quality, watershed health, Superfund sites, fish advisories, impaired waters, and local services working to protect the environment in the area.

Services to share environmental information on the links between human health and environmental exposure. The report on the environment will be an important information tool for understanding and analyzing environmental issues and for evaluating progress.[9]

EPA also launched a redesigned Agency Web site (http://www.epa.gov) that provides enhanced features such as up-to-the-minute coverage of EPA's responses to security threats, gives users more direct access to topics, and strengthens protection of sensitive information. About 1.2 million people visit EPA's top-ranked federal Web site each month for one-stop access to environmental information, including news, resources, applications, maps, tools, and databases.[10]

In FY 2002 EPA implemented its innovative On-Line Rule-making system, which provides a single point for businesses and the public to access all available information on proposed rule-makings. The new electronic access effectively expands opportunities to participate in the process of environmental decision making. The Agency also developed and implemented EDOCKET (http://www.epa.gov/EDOCKET), another e-government initiative that supports the President's Management Agenda. EDOCKET combines eight electronic dockets into one central system, providing a unified, convenient way for the public to comment on any regulatory or nonregulatory action proposed by the Agency. EPA improved on-site access to regulatory information by combining docket centers from several locations into one central site.

Infrastructure to Support Security and Quality

In FY 2002 EPA improved and expanded its information infrastructure to deliver reliable, secure information. EPA systematically assesses and manages risk by implementing effective management and security controls, including risk assessments, analytical reviews, automated monitoring tools, and independent testing. EPA assessed the security of 168 general support systems and major applications. The assessment confirmed the effectiveness of security controls and provided the basis for planning further improvements.[11]

EPA also implemented a virtual private network technology, one of the most effective security technologies available, for electronic information exchange with external business partners. In FY 2002 the Agency continued to support World Trade Center site monitoring activities through its Multi-Agency Environmental Monitoring Database, which also provides the public with a "clickable" interactive map of all relevant monitoring locations.[12] By the end of FY 2002 the database contained hundreds of thousands of records of environmental monitoring data collected by 13 federal, state, city, and private organizations at dozens of sites in the lower Manhattan area and its environs.[13]

In FY 2002 EPA issued the Information Quality Guidelines to improve data quality and accountability for information provided to the public.[14] The guidelines, developed using an electronically enhanced public participation process, include Agency procedures for ensuring information quality. They also outline how the public, particularly the business and scientific communities, can seek correction of information. The Agency also provided a user-friendly method for reporting and resolving data quality errors in all its publicly accessible data through the Integrated Error Correction Process.

EPA is taking a comprehensive, systematic approach to improving information technology planning and investment. In FY 2002 the Agency assessed management of its information technology investment to ensure compliance with federal guidance and requirements. It also took action to better coordinate investments, streamline authority for acquisitions, and formally establish a capital planning and investment control process. EPA started developing a complete investment portfolio aligned with the Agency's technology architecture, deploying the Information Technology Investment Portfolio System, and planning better alignment and efficiencies between information technology investment and other Agency management processes. In FY 2002 EPA established a baseline Agency-wide enterprise architecture to guide system development and conform with federal guidance.

Research Contributions

In FY 2002 EPA submitted seven human health assessments for Agency consensus review. These assessments describe the potential human health impacts of various chemicals found in the environment. This information is used for hazard identification and dose-response evaluations in EPA and state risk assessments, and it is available to the public. Chemical toxicity data will also provide EPA with valuable information that might influence the development of the Agency's regulatory standards and site cleanup decisions. These assessments will be posted on the publicly available Integrated Risk Information System.[15]

Program Evaluation

Appendix A contains descriptions of program evaluations completed in FY 2002 that support the overall goal. No program evaluations focused specifically on FY 2002 performance.

STATE/TRIBAL PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

State and tribal governments are essential partners in EPA's efforts to achieve its vision of integrated access to comprehensive environmental information. Accordingly, the Agency works closely with state and tribal partners on all aspects of the NEIEN.

State Contributions

EPA worked with states and tribes to increase access to information needed to make informed decisions by developing the NEIEN to provide better environmental information for decision making, improving data quality and accuracy, ensuring the security of sensitive data, avoiding data redundancy, and reducing the burden on those who provide and those who access information.

Tribal Contributions

EPA and the EPA Tribal Caucus worked together to plan for achieving the tribes' environmental information vision and priorities. They outlined ongoing and planned tribal information projects and actions for FY 2002 and FY 2003, and they agreed to review progress and identify new initiatives annually. In addition, the Agency awarded NEIEN Grants to 17 tribes.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS OF FY 2002 PERFORMANCE ON FY 2003 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN

EPA increased its FY 2003 target for number of states using the CDX because FY 2002 performance exceeded expectations.

Goal 7: Quality Environmental Information

Summary of FY 2002 Annual Performance Goals

6 Goals Met	0 Goals Not Met	0 Data Lags

A description of the quality of the data used to measure EPA's performance can be found in Appendix B.

FY 2002 Obligations *(in thousands)*:	
EPA Total:	$9,447,202
Goal 7:	$202,090
Goal 7 Share of Total:	2.1%

FY 2002 Costs *(in thousands)*:	
EPA Total:	$7,998,422
Goal 7 Costs:	$253,865
Goal 7 Share of Total:	3.2%

Refer to page I-13 of the Overview (Section I) for an explanation of difference between obligations and costs.
Refer to page IV-11 of the Financial Statements for a consolidated statement of net cost by goal.

Annual Performance Goals (APG) and Measures FY 1999–FY 2002 Results

Strategic Objective: Through 2006, EPA Will Continue to Increase the Availability of Quality Health and Environmental Information Through Educational Services, Partnerships, and Other Methods Designed to Meet EPA's Major Data Needs, Make Data Sets More Compatible, Make Reporting and Exchange Methods More Efficient, and Foster Informed Decision Making.

FY 2002 Cost (in thousands): $87,636 (34.5% of FY 2002 Goal 7 Total Costs)

Progress Toward Strategic Objective: EPA continues to make progress toward this objective, and in FY 2002 improved access to environmental information by implementing new electronic reporting tools. These tools increase the Agency's capability to quickly provide current information and also integrate available environmental data used to support environmental decisions. Highlights include tripling external users of EPA's Central Data Exchange (CDX), increasing by 33% the number of unique facility records in the Federal Registry System, and expanding Window to My Environment to provide the public with a "one stop shop" for federal, state, and local government information on environmental conditions in their communities.

APG 49	Enhanced Public Access	Planned	Actual
FY 2002	**Improve public access to compliance and enforcement documents and data through multimedia data integration projects and other studies, analyses and communication/ outreach activities. Goal Met.**		
	Performance Measure		
	- Make 90% of enforcement and compliance policies and guidances issued this fiscal year available on the Internet within 30 days of issuance.	**90%**	**100%**
FY 2001	*Same Goal, different targets. Goal Not Met.*		
	Performance Measures		
	- By the end of FY 2001, all ten EPA Regions will have an enforcement and compliance web site.	*10*	*9*
	- Make 90% of enforcement and compliance policies and guidances issued this fiscal year available on the Internet within 30 days of issuance.	*90%*	*86%*
	- By April 2001, make summaries of all significant cases available on the Internet.	*100%*	*Not Available*
FY 2000	*Same Goal, different targets. Goal Met.*		
	Performance Measures		
	- Percent of OECA policy and guidance documents available on the Internet.	*90%*	*94%*
	- Increase by 50% the number of states with direct access to Integrated Data for Enforcement Analysis (IDEA).	*21 states*	*34 states*

FY 2002 Result: EPA was able to make all of the enforcement and compliance policies and guidances available to the public by posting them on the Agency's compliance and enforcement web site at http://www.epa.gov/oeca/index.html.

APG 50	Process and Disseminate TRI Information	Planned	Actual
FY 2002	**EPA will reduce reporting burden, improve data quality, lower program costs, and speed data publication by increasing the amount of Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) electronic reporting from 70 to 85%. Goal Met.**	**85%**	**92%**

FY 2001	*Process all submitted facility chemical release reports; publish annual summary of TRI data; provide improved information to the public about TRI chemicals; and maximize public access to TRI information.* Goal Met.		
	Performance Measures		
	- *TRI Public Data Release.*	*1 report*	*1 report*
	- *Chemical submissions and revisions processed.*	*110,000*	*120,000*
FY 2000	*Same Goal, different targets.* Goal Met.		
	Performance Measures		
	- *TRI public data release.*	*1*	*1*
	- *Form R's processed.*	*110,000*	*119,000*
	- *TRIS database complete and report issued.*	*2/2001*	*on target*
FY 1999	*Process 110,000 facility chemical release reports, publish the TRI Data Release Report, and provide improved information to the public about TRI chemicals, enhancing community right-to-know and efficiency processing information from industry.* Goal Met.	*110,000*	*117,171*

FY 2002 Result: In FY 2002, 92% of the chemical submissions for TRI Reporting Year 2001 were submitted and/or prepared electronically. Many facilities used EPA's new, expert software, TRI Made Easy (TRI-ME), thereby making the reporting process significantly easier, faster, and more accurate.

APG 51	**Information Exchange Network**	**Planned**	**Actual**
FY 2002	**The Central Data Exchange, a key component of the environmental information exchange network, will become fully operational and 15 states will be using it to send data to EPA thereby improving data consistency with participating states.** Goal Met.	**15**	**45**

FY 2002 Result: By the end of FY 2002, 45 states were using CDX to send data to EPA, tripling the number of states originally anticipated. The new users significantly increased the flow of data through CDX, speeding progress toward a fully functioning environmental information exchange network.

Strategic Objective: By 2006, EPA Will Provide Access to New Analytical or Interpretive Tools Beyond 2000 Levels So That the Public Can More Easily and Accurately Use and Interpret Environmental Information.
FY 2002 Cost (in thousands): $31,932 (12.6% of FY 2002 Goal 7 Total Costs)

Progress Toward Strategic Objective: EPA is on track to achieve this objective, and in FY 2002 increased users' understanding of available environmental data by integrating and interpreting the many data sets and information sources that are used to support environmental decisions. To support better understanding of environmental information and public health protection, EPA's Window to My Environment became operational and now serves citizens across the country with federal, state, and local environmental information that can be geared to a specific geographic location. In addition, 100% of the publicly available facility data from EPA's national systems accessible on the EPA web site is part of EPA's Integrated Error Correction Process. The Agency used an electronically enhanced public participation process to develop federally required *EPA Information Quality Guidelines*.

APG 52	**Environmental Justice (EJ)**	**Planned**	**Actual**
FY 2002	**Ensure that EPA's policies, programs and activities address disproportionately exposed and under-represented population issues so that no segment suffers disproportionately from adverse health and environmental effects.** Goal Met.		
	Performance Measures		
	- Award 90 grants to organizations which address environmental problems in communities disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards.	**90**	**73**
	- Hold meetings with the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), all stakeholders involved in the environmental justice dialogue, and communities disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards.	**30**	**38**
FY 2001	*Same Goal, different targets.* Goal Met.		
	Performance Measures		
	- *Award 90 grants to organizations which address environmental problems in communities comprised primarily of low income and minority populations.*	*90*	*79*
	- *Hold 25 EPA-sponsored public meetings where disproportionately impacted and disadvantaged communities participate.*	*25*	*25*
	- *Respond within 60 days to 75% of requests made to each Region and National Program Manager to address complaints heard during public comment period at NEJAC public meetings.*	*75%*	*>75%*
	- *Conduct 18 NEJAC meetings and focused roundtables in local communities where problems have been identified.*	*18*	*13*

	- *Increase the number of demonstration projects established under the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice.*	*18*	*15*
FY 2000	*Same Goal, different targets. Goal Met.*		
	Performance Measures		
	- *Number of EPA-sponsored public meetings held where disproportionately disadvantaged communities participate.*	*25*	*31*
	- *Number of grants awarded to low income, minority communities for addressing environmental problems.*	*70*	*62*
FY 1999	*Provide over 100 grants to assist communities with understanding and address EJ issues. Goal Met.*	*100*	*100*

FY 2002 Result: EPA continued to work for equal environmental and health protection through access to information across the United States. EPA published environmental justice reports and sponsored community revitalization demonstration projects and intern training in community organizations. EPA also awarded grants, although it did not receive enough applications to meet the FY 2002 target (this also explains FY 2001 and FY 2000 results for the same performance measure). Although EPA did not receive enough applications to meet the FY 2002 target, it did award grants to all 73 eligible applicants.

APG 53	Data Quality	Planned	Actual
FY 2002	**100% of the publicly available facility data from EPA's national systems accessible on the EPA web site will be part of the Integrated Error Correction Process, reducing data error. Goal Met.**	**100%**	**100%**

FY 2002 Result: Access to the Agency's Integrated Error Correction Process (IECP), a user-friendly method for reporting and resolving errors identified by the public, is now available by clicking on "Contact Us" on the EPA homepage. By offering easy access to IECP via the EPA web site and by providing direct links from more than a dozen databases and web sites, EPA is helping to reduce errors in the information it makes available to the public.

Strategic Objective: Through 2006, EPA Will Continue to Improve the Reliability, Capability, and Security of EPA's Information Infrastructure.

FY 2002 Cost (in thousands): $134,297 (52.9% of FY 2002 Goal 7 Total Costs)

Progress Toward Strategic Objective: EPA is on track and making progress toward this objective. The Agency increased the security of environmental information on its acute infrastructure, financial, and mission critical environmental systems. Based on the assessment results, the Agency strengthened its information security program to ensure the integrity and availability of data and appropriate level of access to data. EPA supported the development of an additional strategy for homeland security by establishing a rigorous plan to prevent and respond to a terrorist attack.

APG 54	Information Security	Planned	Actual
FY 2002	**Complete risk assessments on the Agency's critical infrastructure systems, critical financial systems, and mission critical environmental systems. Goal Met.**		
	Performance Measures		
	- **Critical infrastructure systems risk assessment findings will be formally documented and transmitted to systems owners and managers in a formal Risk Assessment document.**	**12**	**12**
	- **Critical financial systems risk assessment findings will be formally documented and transmitted to systems owners and managers in a formal Risk Assessment document.**	**13**	**13**
	- **Mission critical environmental systems risk assessment findings will be formally documented and transmitted to system owners and managers in a formal Risk Assessment document.**	**5**	**5**

FY 2002 Result: EPA conducted formal risk assessments, including comprehensive testing, on 30 systems. The Agency also conducted base risk assessments on 168 general support systems and major applications. The risk assessments provide fuller knowledge about the threats to, and vulnerabilities of, the Agency's electronic systems, thereby allowing EPA to implement the best possible security measures and achieve a high degree of confidence in its security program.

FY 2001 Annual Performance Goals (No Longer Reported for FY 2002)

Provide guidance for risk assessment to improve the scientific basis of environmental decision making.

Notes:

1. Office of Management and Budget, The Executive Office of the President, Federal Management, *The President's Management Agenda*. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/pma_index.html.
2. U.S. EPA, EPCRA Reporting Center RY2001 Production Statistics, as of September 27, 2002. Prepared by Titan, the EPA contractor that runs the EPCRA Reporting Center. Available upon request to EPA.
3. Source for TRI-ME burden hours: C. Rice, Estimate of Burden Hours for Economic Analyses of the Toxics Release Inventory Program, July 2002 Information Collection Request (Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Information, June 10, 2002). Available at http://www.epa.gov/tri/lawsandregs/burden_hour_memo.pdf. Source for error reduction: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Data Quality Impact of Pilot Version of TRI-ME (October 2002). Available upon request.
4. U.S. EPA EPCRA Reporting Center.
5. Ibid.
6. U.S. EPA, Office of Environmental Information, *Toxics Release Inventory: Public Data Release Report*, EPA 260-R-02-003 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 2002). Available (with related materials) at http://www.epa.gov/tri/tridata/tri00/index.htm.
7. U.S. EPA, *2002 Toxics Release Inventory Data Release, Questions and Answers*, Final (May 29, 2002). Available at http://www.epa.gov/tri/tridata/tri00/index.htm.
8. U.S. EPA, *Guidance for Reporting Releases and Other Waste Management Quantities of Toxic Chemicals: Lead and Lead Compounds*, EPA 260-B-01-027 (December 2001). Available at http://www.epa.gov/tri/guide_docs/index.htm#chemical_sp.
9. U.S. EPA, Environmental Indicators Initiative. Information available at http://www.epa.gov/indicators.
10. U.S. EPA, Office of Environmental Information, Information Access Division, U.S. EPA Web Site Statistics (September 2002).
11. Office of Management and Budget, *Guidance for Preparing and Submitting Security Plans of Action and Milestones*, Memorandum 02-01 (October 17, 2001). Memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies.
12. Available at http://www.epa.gov/wtc/.
13. U.S. EPA, EPA response to September 11. Information available at http://www.epa.gov/wtc/. See also Monitoring Summaries at http://www.epa.gov/WTC/summary.html. For New York City response, see also EnviroMapper at http://www.epa.gov/wtc/em/.
14. Available at http://www.epa.gov/oei/qualityguidelines/index.htm.
15. U.S. EPA, Office of Research and Development, National Center for Environmental Assessment, Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS). Available only through the Internet at http://www.epa.gov/iris/index.html.

This Page Intentionally Blank